

October 20, 2019

Dear Mark Grimes, Board of Governors' Members, and CEO Don Boyle:

We write in reference to Item EP7.4 – Agreement with Toronto Event Centre Inc. (Muzik Clubs Inc.).

We, the members of the twelve community associations comprising the West Side Community Council, write to express concerns about the current tenant of the Horticultural Building and the surrounding patio area. We would also like to address the future of this site.

We have several concerns, including that

1. We are dismayed by the continued poor maintenance of this heritage building by the tenant: the flagpole is broken; the dome needs repair.
2. The hoardings surrounding the building and patio area are anti-social, and make it look like the site is constantly under construction. Surely both the fact and presentation of these hoardings is antithetical to the intended public presentation of this historic building.
3. After years of public outcry, there remains no public access to the historic Garden of the Greek Gods sculptures. We are also concerned about what is reported to be ongoing damage to these valuable donated sculptures.
4. We are strongly opposed to the attempt, initiated by the tenants of the Horticulture Building, to put forward an Official Plan amendment allowing lease agreements to extend past 21 years. We dismiss as unfounded and unsubstantiated the supposed need to extend the lease in the case of the property at issue, and given that the cheap rent and already-long lease was intended to compensate for upkeep of the building which has not in fact been done (see point 1, above). More generally, allowing leases longer than 21 years counts, by the City's own lights, as effective disposal of a given property; allowing this in the case of the Horticulture and other heritage buildings would constitute a clear failure of proper governance and management of these heritage buildings on publicly owned lands.
5. As is familiar, gun violence and assaults have been associated with activities at the venue. Surely better uses, and better tenants, could be found for this important property.

Finally, now that the Master Plan has been initiated, which details a sweeping revitalization of the Exhibition Place grounds, and will result in much increased traffic and revenue for the Exhibition Place grounds, isn't it wise to put aside long-term negotiations on leases till the Master Plan is implemented? Basing leases on current financial projections, as the grounds are now constituted, is not in the City's best interest.

We would like the opportunity to speak to these points at the Board of Governors' meeting on October 24th, 2019.

Sincerely,
Ric Amis
Chair, West Side Community Council

Members of the WSCC include the Grange Community Association, the Harbord Village Residents' Association, the Garment District Neighbourhood Association, the Trinity Bellwoods Community Association, the Ossington Community Association, the Lakeview Avenue Neighbourhood Association, the Liberty Village Residents' Association, Beaconsfield Village Residents' Association, Active 18, the Parkdale Residents Association, Roncesvalles-Macdonell Residents Association, and the Bloordale Community Improvement Association.